

Proposal for a Corrections / Judiciary Study Committee:

1. A Committee will be convened with monthly meetings from July to December 2023 to explore strategies and programs to reduce incarceration in Vermont by exploring alternatives utilized in New England and beyond. Of particular focus will be issues impacting women that would impact development of the best replacement options for the current Chittendon Women's Regional Facility.
2. The Committee will research models that have reduced incarceration and recidivism rates by introducing alternative sentencing and programs for those who face criminal charges.
3. Included would be alternative sentencing (drug treatment, mental health supports, and home detention) and community based reentry and rehabilitation programs including residential and non residential mental health and substance abuse recovery support programs and vocational training programs. The Committee could also consider alternative placements for our high population of detainees. The Committee would research/ study what has worked outside of Vermont and visit programs where feasible.
4. The Committee could include:
  - two members of Senate Judiciary Committee
  - Two members of House Corrections Committee
  - One member each from House and Senate Human Services Committees
  - A representative from the ACLU
  - Two members from DOC
  - Two members who are directors or reentry coordinators at VT Community Justice Centers
  - A member from the ACLU
  - A member from Dismas House
  - A member from VT Works for Women
  - A state's attorney
5. The Work group will submit a report of policy recommendations by December 20, 2023 to the House Corrections & Institutions Committee and Senate Corrections Committee (prior to the 2024 Legislative session)
6. The goal of the work group is to research, connect with and in some cases visit programs that could be models for Vermont that could reduce our need for incarcerative beds and shape Judiciary and Corrections policy. Questions to be considered include:
  - Should Vermont increase drug treatment programs and supports in our corrections facilities?

- Should Vermont develop Community based options (especially for our women's facility which is the next one to be replaced?)
- Should Vermont develop options for detainees other than incarceration while awaiting trial, including home detention?
- Should Vermont expand diversion and restorative panels and other restorative practices to be used for cases beyond misdemeanors?